



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Northwest Region
7600 Sand Point Way N.E., Bldg. 1
Seattle, WA 98115

FEB - 3 2006

Governor Christine Gregoire
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Jeff Koenings, Director
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
600 Capitol Way N.
Olympia, WA 98501

George Trott, Chairman
Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board
2127 8th Ave
Longview WA 98632

Dear Governor Gregoire, Dr. Koenings, and Mr. Trott:

I am pleased to announce approval of the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board's Salmon Recovery Plan as an Interim Regional Recovery Plan (Interim Plan) for the Washington management unit of the Lower Columbia Chinook salmon Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU), Columbia River chum salmon ESU, and the Lower Columbia River steelhead Distinct Population Segment (DPS). On April 20, 2005, we published notice in the Federal Register (70 FR 20531) on the availability of the Interim Plan and Supplement for public comment. Our response to comments received during the public comment period is now complete and is being posted on our public website at: www.nwr.noaa.gov.

In approving this Interim Plan for the Washington portion of the Willamette/Lower Columbia River Recovery Domain, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) is committing to implement the actions in the Interim Plan and Supplement for which we have authority, to work cooperatively on implementation of other actions, and to encourage other Federal agencies to implement actions for which they have responsibility and authority. We also encourage the state to seek similar implementation commitments from state agencies and local governments.



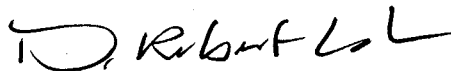
NOAA Fisheries believes that Lower Columbia River salmon and steelhead will benefit from immediate implementation of the Interim Plan. The Interim Plan will be extremely valuable to implementing entities and to the public because of its clear articulation of goals, comprehensive assessment of limiting factors and threats, and identification of actions needed to address those threats.

NOAA Fisheries supports implementation of all the actions in the Interim Plan, with the qualifications and clarifications noted on pages 27 and 28 of our April 15, 2005, Supplement to the Interim Plan.

To comply with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), a complete Recovery Plan must address the entire range of each of the ESUs and DPSs in the Lower Columbia River Recovery Domain. Development of recovery measures for the remaining portion of the Recovery Domain is underway. When that is done, a complete ESA Recovery Plan (consisting of the LCFRB Interim Plan, Supplements, and the plan for the remainder of the range of the ESA populations), will be developed and made available for public review and comment as a proposed ESA Recovery Plan.

We look forward to continuing our work with the Board, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office as we move forward on implementation of the Interim Plan and as we complete a final ESA Recovery Plan for the Lower Columbia River Recovery Domain. We commend the state of Washington and the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board for their continued commitment to salmon recovery.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Robert Lohn". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "D" and a trailing flourish.

D. Robert Lohn
Regional Administrator

cc: Bob Nichols, GSRO
Chris Drivdahl, GSRO
Phil Miller, GSRO
Guy Norman, WDFW
Jeff Breckel, LCFRB

bcc: Rob Walton, SRD
Patty Dornbusch, SRD
Mike Crouse, HCD
Frank Lockhart, SFD
Donna Darm, PRD
Bruce Suzomoto, HYD
Rob Jones
Rich Turner
Steve Landino
Dan Guy
Peter Dygert
Keith Kirkendall
Michelle Day
Cathy Tortorici